

# Kentucky Literacy Link

A Publication of the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE)

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## Choosing to Teach: Using Our Words Carefully

Mikkaka “MK” Overstreet is a KDE literacy consultant and the editor of this publication. Contact her at [mikkaka.overstreet@education.ky.gov](mailto:mikkaka.overstreet@education.ky.gov).

As we begin a new school year, it is a great time to reflect on our profession and what each of us is doing to elevate it. I was inspired this summer by a teacher blogger named Jennifer Corroy who wrote a piece entitled “[I Choose to Teach](#).”

Corroy, an English teacher in Texas, carefully analyzes the language we use when talking about teaching. How do we present our profession to the public? Do our language choices reinforce negative or belittling views?

According to Corroy, “All too often, we use phrases like ‘step up,’ ‘better opportunity’ or ‘rising

up through the ranks,’ or we suggest that by stepping out of the classroom, a teacher can have a ‘broader impact.’ In all of these words, we’re implying that the classroom is a place for people who are either incapable of better things or just not interested in advancement.”

Though we know this isn’t true, I can’t count how many times I’ve faced such assumptions from people outside of the field. I remember the incredulity of people who couldn’t believe I’d “waste” all of my brains and potential on being “just a teacher”. I also remember being told that “anybody can be a teacher”, as if there were no heart or art or skill involved.

I reject these notions. Teaching is one of the hardest, most reward-

ing, and most important professions in existence. Yet Corroy made me think—has my language always reflected my perception?

Corroy writes, “We damage our own collective cause—making an excellent education available to all students—when our actions and language teach our kids that if they can, they should do something better than teaching. Instead, we should be encouraging our best and brightest students to consider careers in the classroom, and we should be modeling for them that this is an ambitious, challenging and rewarding choice.”

This year, let’s be intentional in how we represent this amazing field we’ve chosen.

Read Corroy’s entire blog [here](#).

## Kentucky Department of Education Updates

### Mark Your Calendars for the PGES Webcasts

The PGES Webcast takes place on the third Wednesday of every month at 9:30 a.m. ET. A survey of districts indicated this to be a better time for most viewers. You may view the PGES Webcast [here](#). The next webcast will be August 20 at 9:30 a.m. ET. The format will be the same as last year and include a question and answer period at the end. We will continue to record the webcast (the archived copy is accessible from the main PGES webpage) and send out the questions and answers each month.

### PGES Professional Learning Modules Now Available

The Kentucky Leadership Association (KLA) in conjunction with the

KDE has compiled a set of Professional Learning Modules that can be used for staff professional learning surrounding TPGES and PPGES. The modules can be downloaded as zip files from the sidebar on the [PGES website](#). They come in three folders: PPGES Modules, TPGES Modules Part A, and TPGES Modules Part B. It is important that you download both Part A and Part B of the TPGES Modules. Because the modules are in zip file format, iOS devices will not support their download. A crosswalk of the Modules with the new [Kentucky Professional Learning Standards](#) is also available.

### School Report Card Earns Praise

In a recent [report](#) by the Education Commission of the States

(ECS), Kentucky’s online School Report Card was singled out as one of only eight nationwide that was easy-to-find, informative and readable. The report went on to praise the state for including what ECS calls the five essential indicators of school accountability: student achievement, achievement gap closure, student academic growth, college/career-readiness and graduation rate. Kentucky is one of only 13 states that includes each indicator as part of the accountability system and reports the results of each on its school report card. This year’s School Report Card promises to be even better than in the past with the addition of a finance tab. The 2013-14 report card is scheduled for release in the fall.



## Spotlight: Hardin County Schools Preschool Program, Heartland Elementary School

[Stephanie Ash](#) is a first-year preschool teacher who recently completed the Kentucky Teacher Internship Program (KTIP) process. A requirement of the program was that Ash develop and implement a leadership project that reflects school goals. As part of her leadership project, she worked with the Hardin County Public Library to enhance literacy in the preschool classrooms at Heartland Elementary School.



Student's response to *Nemo: Just Keep Swimming* (fiction) by Melissa Lagenegro Lagenegro: "Just Keep Swimming"

Last fall, I contacted the Hardin County Public Library to establish an ongoing schedule for the bookmobile to visit Heartland's three preschool classrooms. During the bookmobile's bi-monthly visits children were read a story and then allowed to choose a book from the bookmobile to keep in the classroom and read while at school. Children really enjoyed the experience of going onto the bookmobile and choosing a book that interested them. During each visit, books were returned and new books were checked out.

In February, our classes visited the library. During the field trip, the children participated in literacy activities and learned about appropriate book care. I wanted the children to have some real-life experience with borrowing library books. According to a parent survey that was previously distributed, many children do not have library cards and have not had the opportunity to check out books from a library. I decided to establish our very own classroom lending library, where children could borrow books from the classroom to take home and bring back when they were finished.

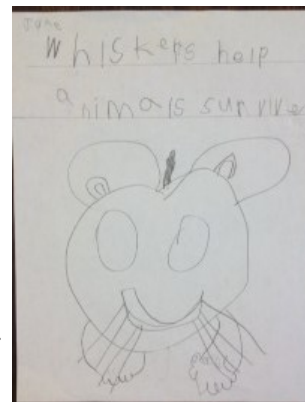
As part of the literacy component, I wanted to assess child and family involvement. I added a writing component, which encourages children to draw and dictate a picture illustrating their favorite part of the book. The children are used to this task, as journal writing is a regular activity in our classroom. This practice encourages more family involvement while providing an opportunity for children to analyze the books that they choose.

I spent some time gathering donated books that were developmentally appropriate for many different reading and interest levels. Although most of the children in my classroom enjoy listening to stories being read, some of them are ready to start reading familiar words and phrases. After gathering a supply of reading materials that would interest all the children in my classroom, I prepared a [check-out system](#) to keep track

of who was checking out which books and when they were checked out and returned. I placed the information in a binder so that all staff could access it when children were ready to check out/in a book. I typed up a [letter](#) explaining the process to parents and sent it home.

As children return the books that they borrow from the classroom, along with their drawings and dictations, I allow them to share their drawings with the class to encourage speaking and listening skills. As children become more familiar with the process, I plan on extending the lending library by adding more books. This is a project that I plan to continue throughout the upcoming years.

I get great enjoyment from reading and hope that with continued opportunities like this, children will develop a love for reading as well. As preschool teachers, we are constantly coming up with fun and interesting ways to involve families in their children's learning. I think this is a great way to encourage families to be involved in reading to their children at home, as well as encouraging children to analyze what they have read.



Student response to *Whiskers* (informational) by Catherine Daly-Weir: "Whiskers help animals survive"

## TranspArtation Grants Available for Kentucky Schools, Teachers

Kentucky schools and teachers can apply for the next round of TranspArtation grants from the Kentucky Arts Council for arts-related field trips to be taken between Oct. 1, 2014, and June 30, 2015.

The grant funding is available for any Kentucky school, public or private, that supports grades pre-K through 12, to assist with transportation costs to and from arts field trips and events. Grants are awarded on a quar-

terly basis and are based on mileage from the school building to the arts organization or performance venue and the number of buses necessary. There is a minimum grant amount of \$100.

"There are four opportunities throughout the year to apply for the arts council's TranspArtation grant," said Lori Meadows, arts council executive director. "This program ensures teachers who are eager to provide arts education experiences to their stu-

dents have multiple opportunities to do so."

Applicants must be attending one of several pre-approved arts venues in the Kentucky Arts Partnership program that have demonstrated appropriate arts programming and the ability to provide supplemental education materials to teachers and schools.

The deadline for the current round of funding is Aug. 15. To

view guidelines or apply online, click [here](#) or contact [Jean St. John](#), arts education director.

The [Kentucky Arts Council](#), the state arts agency, creates opportunities for Kentuckians to value, participate in and benefit from the arts. Kentucky Arts Council funding is provided by the Kentucky General Assembly and the National Endowment for the Arts.



## The Missing Piece of the Proficiency Puzzle: Families and Communities

As another school year begins, it is a good time to review our commitments to children, their families and the community. In 2007, the Kentucky Department of Education released a report on the importance of and recommendations for involving families and communities in improving student achievement. Read the full report [here](#). Your school might also find [this resource](#) helpful as you consider next steps.

### Key Excerpts:

#### History and Mission

From its beginning under Commissioner Wilmer Cody in 1999, the purpose of the Commissioner's Parents Advisory Council (CPAC) has been to advise the Kentucky Department of Education on policy issues and to increase positive leadership of parents for improving public education. The CPAC considers topics that are of interest to parents, especially ways that parents and communities can assist schools in raising the achievement level for all schools and every student.

The Commissioner's Parents Advisory Council has over 30 parent members from across the state, nominated by the Kentucky Parent Teacher Association, the Kentucky Association of School Councils, and the Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence. CPAC members are selected at the discretion of the Commissioner for two-year terms and meet quarterly. A majority of CPAC members have completed the Commonwealth Institute for Parent Leadership (CIPL) training offered by the Prichard Committee. In addition, many have benefited from training provided by the PTA and Kentucky Association of School Councils. These three leadership programs have created a cadre of experienced parent leaders.

#### Why is this Important?

Family and community involvement can have a powerful and positive impact on student

outcomes. According to *A New Wave of Evidence: The Impact of School, Family and Community Connections on Student Achievement*, a research review published by the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory in 2002, students with involved



parents, no matter what their income or background, are more likely to:

- Earn higher grades and test scores, and enroll in higher-level programs
- Be promoted, pass their classes, and earn credits
- Attend school regularly
- Have better social skills, show improved behavior, and adapt well to school
- Graduate and go on to post-secondary education

A solid body of research finds that families of all income and education levels, and from all ethnic and cultural groups, support their children's learning at home. Families with more income and education, however, tend to be more engaged at school and have more resources to help their children at home. Supporting all families to be more involved at school and better informed about what children are learning in class must become a widely-used strategy for improving learning and addressing the achievement gap.

### Recommendations

In the *Kentucky Family and Community Involvement Guide to Student Achievement*, a comprehensive performance assessment tool, CPAC proposes specific school-level descriptors for each objective. These descriptors include provisions that every student in Kentucky will have a parent, or another adult, who knows how to support that student's academic achievement. The objectives are as follows:

1. Relationship-building: The school staff builds productive, personal relationships with parents of all students.
2. Communications: Two-way information in many forms flows regularly between school staff and parents about students' academic achievement and individual needs.
3. Decision-making: School staff encourages, supports, and expects parents to be involved in school improvement decisions and to monitor and assist school improvement.
4. Advocacy: For each student, the school staff identifies and supports a parent or other adult who can take personal responsibility for understanding and speaking for that child's learning needs.
5. Learning Opportunities: The school staff ensures that families have multiple opportunities to understand how to support their children's learning.
6. Community Partnerships: The school staff engages and partners with community members to plan and implement substantive work to improve student achievement.

We hope this report will help to unleash a powerful wave of activity in our schools and a great leap forward in student achievement. The future of our state depends on it.

## Teacher Workshop Aims to Engage Students in Reading

**The Independent**  
Ashland, Kentucky *Online*

Getting children to read effectively requires knowing what people do when they read—and it's not answering questions on a worksheet.

"Real readers read and then talk about what they've read. Why don't we do that in the classroom?" said Melinda Willis, an educa-

tion professor at Morehead State University.

Willis, who also is director of the Kentucky Reading Project, is spending the week in Boyd County with two colleagues working with teachers to develop better ways to engage their students with books.

The week-long workshop will provide the teachers techniques they can use in their classrooms and tailor to the needs of their own school and the children there.

Read more from *The Independent* (Ashland, KY) [here](#).

## Governor's Mansion Films Available for Classroom Use

As part of the centennial celebration of the Kentucky Governor's Mansion during 2014, two films have been produced by Kentucky filmmaker Michael Breeding that provide a wealth of historical and subject-related information about the Governor's Mansion that can be applied to classroom learning situations. First Lady Jane Beshear is leading the year-long centennial celebration with an emphasis on the need for the mansion's preservation. Click on [this link](#) to hear a message from the First Lady about these films as resources for teachers.



Mr. Breeding is generously making these films accessible to all Kentucky teachers for use in classrooms. The full length documentary (appropriate for middle and high school levels), narrated by Diane Sawyer, is about 57 minutes long and the children's version (elementary level) is about 17 minutes in

length. They are both formatted in chapters, which makes them user-friendly for integration into lessons. Both films, as well as some additional clips from the full length documentary, can be found [here](#).

We encourage you to integrate these tremendous resources into your instruction during the upcoming school year and follow up with some other related tools being developed by Kentucky teachers that will be placed in CIITS later this fall.

## Technology Critique: Literative—Teaching Children to Read



*Rachel Fields is a second grade teacher in Jefferson County.*

This website has tons of activities to help kids from about ages 3-6. There are virtual stories and games to help with a variety of phonemic awareness and phonics skills. All the games are made to be fun for students, and each one includes a very specific description to help teachers decide which ones their students need. There are also worksheets that can be downloaded and used for supple-

mental instruction. There is an English as a Second Language (ESL) tab that allows stories to be read in English and Spanish. The website is free, but you do have to create an account.

**Classroom Applications:** I utilize this website for individual student use. I actually teach 2nd grade, so the website is not technically aimed for my students. However, I have several students who are at least a grade level behind, so there's a lot of appropriate activities on the website for them. I choose whatever skill we are working on and then select an appropri-

ate game for the students to play based on that skill.

For example, when I was working on initial L blends with my tier 3 students last week, I had them work in a group with me on these blends, practice independently during their Word Work block, and play the games on Literative as additional practice. My students love them, and are very motivated to play them—even multiple times. I have not used the associated worksheets, because I already have enough paper resources for phonics and phonemic awareness. The virtual stories are good, but not as exciting to kids as the games/activities.

One shortcoming of this website is that it is often temperamental. You sometimes have to refresh a few times or wait a bit for a game to load. This can be disruptive to the class routine because it leads to students needing your help with the computer when you are busy doing other things. Another note of caution is that the activities should be used as supplements to more hands-on instruction from a teacher so that students know how to apply the skills they are learning. Overall, this is a great source that gives you specific help with a large variety of phonics and phonemic awareness skills, and students love it!

## PD 360 Update Makes Professional Development Easier



The latest PD 360 release is more than a feature freshener. It's an entirely new platform with a new interface that automatically serves up the resources you need.

Easier and more useful

- Delivers incredibly specific PD content—just-in-time resources on just the right topics to help teachers tweak and improve their classroom
- Serves up exactly what teachers need, with items like assigned PD, group

activity, and personal video queues delivered front and center on the home page

High performance—anytime, anywhere, on most devices

- Technology advancements dramatically improve performance, reducing load times and ensuring data stability
- Full mobility allows for anytime, anywhere access on most smart devices

More than just professional development

- The new PD 360 is the cornerstone of the comprehensive suite of professional learning tools that helps teachers become even more effective

### Important Note:

There is no change to the way PD 360 is accessed. Continue to access PD 360 via CIITS, the way you always have.

**Step 1:** Go to [ciits.kyschools.us](http://ciits.kyschools.us).

**Step 2:** Enter your CIITS username and password. Note:

If you encounter difficulty logging into your CIITS account, please follow the instructions listed on the CIITS login screen.

**Step 3:** Once logged in, click on the green “PD 360 & Common Core 360” icon located under School Improvement Network on the left-hand side of the screen.

[Click here](#) to see all of the exciting changes to PD 360. Remember, there is no additional cost to you or your district to use this resource.

## 2014 KET Young Writers Contest Winners Announced



Kentucky Educational Television (KET) thanks everyone who entered the

2014 Young Writers Contest. This year's contest was a great success with a total of 548 entries. You can download and view the 2014 winning entries [here](#).

Here is the complete list of 2014 winners:

### Short Stories

#### Third Grade

1. *My Teacher's Secret Life* by Carley R. (McCracken County)
2. *Working My Way Up* by Kennedy B. (Jefferson County)
3. *The Wizards of the World* by Benjamin M. (Bagdad)

#### Fourth Grade

1. *Flower Fiasco* by Abby K. (Kenton County)
2. *Lonely Lily* by Paige F. (Hebron)
3. *Glass Ball* by Hannelore T. (Jefferson County)

#### Fifth Grade

1. *My Sock Puppet* by Ava C. (McCracken County)
2. *Mysterious Mansion* by Camryn S. (Meade County)
3. *Dog Dreams* by Whitney C. (Bell County)

### Illustrated Stories

#### Kindergarten

1. *Charlotte, the Lovely Princess* by Zunairah S. (Jefferson County)
2. *The Rainbow Unicorn* by Piper S. (Jessamine County)
3. *Animal Fun in Outer Space* by Lilly A. (Nortonville)

#### First Grade

1. *Cassidy and Her Duck* by Cameron H. (Franklin)
2. *The Farmer and the Red-Tailed Hawk* by Charles W. (Oldham County)
3. *The Sunflower* by Jillian S. (New Albany, IN)

#### Second Grade

1. *Friendship... The Dolphin Way* by Jilia M. (Oldham County)
2. *Cy Monster* by Luke G. (Clay County)

3. *Sleep Dust* by Avery S. (Jessamine County)

#### Third Grade

1. *Bubbly is Back* by Tiyasa C. (Cincinnati, OH)
2. *Waddle's Adventure* by Kaja J. (Frankfort)
3. *The Butterfly Blues* by Kaydence W. (Palmyra, IN)

#### Fourth Grade

1. *Water and Winter Do Not Go Together* by Willow T. (Jefferson County)
2. *Elevation* by Amelia F. (Clay County)
3. *Merrimila and Her Friends* by Ruth E. (Nicholasville)

#### Fifth Grade

1. *The Adventures of Sheriff Meatball* by Raygen B. (Boone County)
2. *Owlie Whooot Helps the Three Little Puppies* by Sarah P. (Fleming County)
3. *Why Penguins Waddle* by Hannah R. (Science Hill)

KET hopes you will continue to encourage your young writers and illustrators and looks forward to reading more great stories in 2015!

## Upcoming Literacy Events Around Kentucky

### KRA Annual Conference



The Kentucky Reading Association (KRA) will hold its 2014 annual conference on October 16-18, 2014 at the Galt House Hotel in Louisville. This year's theme is "Lifelong Literacy for Pleasure and Learning". Featured speakers include Doug Fisher, Linda Gambrell and more. Click [here](#) for the full conference preview. Click [here](#) to register. For more information, visit KRA's [website](#) or contact conference chair [Peggy Stirsman](#).

### Kentucky Storytelling Conference 2014



The Kentucky Storytelling Association (KSA) will hold its annual conference in Bowling Green, KY on November 7-8th at the Holiday Inn University Plaza & Sloan Convention Center. Public Librarians earn up to 17.25 contact hours. Teachers/School Librarians will be provided certificates to document participation, up to 17.25 professional development hours. Learn all about the conference [here](#). To go straight to specific workshop offerings, click [here](#).

### KSTA Annual Conference



Make plans to attend the Kentucky Science Teachers Association (KSTA) Annual Conference, November 6-8, in Lexington. The 42nd conference promises to be one of the most important in recent years due to the adoption of new standards for science. Science educators from all over the state will be looking to share ideas about the changes to curriculum, pedagogy and materials that the new standards will require. Information and registration forms can be found at the KSTA [website](#) under the Events tab on the home page. Applications for presentations are still being accepted. If you would like to offer a session, you may download an application form from the website above.

### Innovations for Learning Conference



The Innovations for Learning (IFL) Conference is a one day conference produced by the Office of Instructional Technology at Fayette County Schools in partnership with the Central Kentucky Educational Cooperative (CKEC)

and the University of Kentucky College of Education. The conference focus is on innovative instructional strategies that engage students to improve learning. IFL is open to all teachers, technology specialists (TRTs, TISs), administrators, and anyone else interested in how to use technology to improve student learning. This year's conference will be held at Bryan Station High School, 201 Eastin Rd, Lexington, KY 40505, and is free for all participants. This year the conference is Saturday, Sept. 13, 2014. Learn more and register [here](#).

### Kentucky Association for Environmental Education's 38th Annual Conference



Join KAEE at the Clarion in Lexington for the 2014 Kentucky Association for Environmental Education Conference. The theme is "Sustaining Our Future". The conference will be held on September 12-13, 2014. Check out the [KAEE Conference Registration Brochure 2014](#) for more information. Apply for 50% off with a [KAEE Scholarship](#) through August 5. [Register Here!](#) Early Bird discounts apply until August 15!

# Help

Your contributions of ideas and lessons that work are welcome. E-mail [mikkaka.overstreet@education.ky.gov](mailto:mikkaka.overstreet@education.ky.gov) to submit. Your submissions may be included in the Literacy Link to help connect teachers across the state by sharing ideas, insights and best practices.

Access this and past Literacy Links on KDE's website:  
[Click Here](#)



## If you have questions or concerns, we want to help. Contact:

- Rebecca Atkins-Stumbo – Literacy and Preschool Consultant – [rebecca.atkins-stumbo@education.ky.gov](mailto:rebecca.atkins-stumbo@education.ky.gov)
- Kelly Clark – Literacy Consultant – [kelly.clark@education.ky.gov](mailto:kelly.clark@education.ky.gov)
- Kathy Mansfield– Library Media/Textbooks Consultant – [kathy.mansfield@education.ky.gov](mailto:kathy.mansfield@education.ky.gov)
- MK Overstreet – Literacy Consultant – [mikkaka.overstreet@education.ky.gov](mailto:mikkaka.overstreet@education.ky.gov)
- Teresa Rogers – Literacy Consultant – [teresa.rogers@education.ky.gov](mailto:teresa.rogers@education.ky.gov)
- Pamela Wininger – Literacy Consultant – [pamela.winger@education.ky.gov](mailto:pamela.winger@education.ky.gov)



## Feedback from the Field

*Your feedback helps us to tailor the Link to best meet the needs of teachers. Tell us how you're using it. Tell us what you want to see more or less of. We want to hear from you! E-mail [MK.Overstreet](mailto:MK.Overstreet@education.ky.gov).*

"As usual, I enjoyed reading the latest issue of the Literacy Link. I was espe-

cially taken by the poem by Maya Angelou. What a powerful message! I ran off copies for everyone I work with so they could share in her "miraculous" words. We have lost a great lady!"

—Cary

"What a fitting tribute to Maya Ange-

lou! Thanks for sharing!"

—Phil

"I learn something new every time I read the Link! Thanks for sharing!"

—Tisha



## Additional Reading and Other Resources

- As we approach a new school year and begin making curriculum plans, please find resources from KET relating to the Arts and Arts Integration in the flyer [here](#). Contact [Amy Grant](#) if you have questions or if you would like to schedule a workshop with your KET Education Consultant concerning Arts Integration or any KET resource(s).
- The [American Library Association \(ALA\) awards ceremony](#) for books in the Youth Media category, including Newbery and Caldecott (the last two categories) was held in the spring. This is a great opportunity to see what is considered the "best of the best" in children's and young adult literature and to share the excitement of the awards ceremony with students.
- To promote the use of formative assessment, the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) created a national initiative. The initiative formally began in January 2006, when CCSSO formed the Formative Assessment (FA) Advisory Group consisting of measurement and education researchers. Read about the attributes of effective formative assessment [here](#). Click [here](#) for examples of practice.
- [BetterLesson](#) and the [National Education Association](#) (NEA) have partnered to create the NEA Master Teacher Project, an effort to highlight and share the best teaching practices around the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Their new product, [cc.betterlesson.com](http://cc.betterlesson.com), is designed to showcase the results of this effort. The project brings together 130+ teachers in grades K-12 math and ELA to share lessons, reflections, real-life insight into what worked, what misfired and tips/tricks to successful CCSS implementation.
- As you embark on this year's adventure with a new group of students, the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) has [resources, lesson plans, and activities](#) to support you.
- [Usa.gov](#) offers these [tips and resources](#) to share with families for back to school.
- The National Center for Families Learning also has back-to-school [tips](#) to share with families.
- NEA's [back to school guide](#) features educator-tested tips, advice and resources for a positive start to the school year.
- Love [PBS LearningMedia](#), but need a little help finding the best of the best resources? KET has collected all the PBS LearningMedia videos and interactives that their education consultants love in one convenient place! Visit the [Education Consultants Resource Picks](#) collection and find your subject area to start exploring!
- PBS LearningMedia's [ECHO Collection](#) provides rich, multi-disciplinary educational resources in science, literacy and language arts, fine art, and social studies. The combined skills, experience, and collections of our six institutions provide life-enhancing educational opportunities in and out of the classroom, strengthening knowledge of local culture and identity.

